



Brave New Words: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction

By Jeff Prucher

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***Brave New Words* is the winner of a 2008 Hugo Award for excellence in the field of science fiction and fantasy.**

The first historical dictionary devoted to science fiction, *Brave New Words: The Oxford Dictionary of Science Fiction* shows exactly how science-fictional words and their associated concepts have developed over time, with full citations and bibliographic information. It's a window on a whole genre of literature through the words invented and passed along by the genre's most talented writers. In addition, it shows how many words we consider everyday vocabulary-words like "spacesuit," "blast off," and "robot"-had their roots in imaginative literature, and not in hard science.

Citations are included for each definition, starting with the earliest usage that can be found. These citations are drawn not only from science fiction books and magazines, but also from mainstream publications, fanzines, screenplays, newspapers, comics, film, songs, and the Internet. In addition to illustrating the different ways each word has been used, citations also show when and where words have moved out of the science fiction lexicon and into that of other subcultures or mainstream English.

Brave New Words covers the shared language of science fiction, as well as the vocabulary of science fiction criticism and its fans--those terms that are used by many authors in multiple settings. Words coined in science fiction have become part of the vocabulary of any number of subcultures and endeavors, from comics, to neo-paganism, to aerospace, to computers, to environmentalism, to zine culture. This is the first book to document this vocabulary transfer. Not just a useful reference and an entertaining browse, this book also documents the enduring legacy of science fiction writers and fans.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is a fine work, helpful for anyone who has ever been asked what the hell we've been talking about all this time. Grade: A"--*SciFi Magazine*

"I had an embarrassingly good time poring through *Brave New Words*. It's more than a dictionary, it's a secret history of science fiction -- and of the last 50 years of popular culture."--John Scalzi, author of *Old Man's War*

"An excellent source for any library, the volume is highly accessible and a joy to read."--*American Libraries*

"An important and entertaining reference for any science fiction writer, magazine editor, fan, neophyte reader, or librarian....Both interesting and humorous. Many science fiction fans will probably read it from cover to cover. Highly recommended. All levels."--*CHOICE*

"Bottom Line: This admirable and unique source demonstrates on nearly every page the surprising extent to which the language of science fiction has entered everyday English--terms and concepts such as beam me up, cyberspace, downtime, gateway, morph, newspeak, robot, and space cadet. **Highly recommended** for public and academic libraries with an interest in science fiction."--*Library Journal*

"One of those rare reference books that is both enjoyable to browse and useful as a reference tool, *Brave New Words* may be the best subject dictionary of 2007....Like the rest of the work, the forematter is written so clearly and precisely that it will be understandable to readers at all levels, which is important because the book has a very broad potential audience, from academics to the general public....For anyone needing information about an important science fiction author or subgenre, this is a definitive list, making it useful for readers' advisors, students writing papers, and science fiction fans of all ages. *Brave New Words* is highly recommended for all academic and public libraries."--*Booklist*, starred review

"Attentive not only to the vocabulary of science fiction novels and stories, but also to the critical terminology of the field and the colorful in-group language of science fiction fandom....furnishes a rich picture of both the literary genre and the quirky subculture....All in all, this is an outstanding dictionary, with a strong claim to being the best subject historical dictionary so far published."--Fred R. Shapiro, *Dictionaries: Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America*

"Many science fiction aficionados will want to acquire this book for their home libraries. Public and academic libraries, especially those that maintain science fiction collections, will want to add this work to their reference collections. It is just plain fun to browse through the entries."--*American Reference Books Annual*

About the Author

Jeff Prucher is a freelance lexicographer and an editor for the *Oxford English Dictionary's* science fiction project. He has previously been a bookseller, office temp, editorial assistant for *Locus*, and software quality assurance engineer. He lives in Berkeley with his family.

Users Review

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